

## **Cobbosseecontee – Annabessacook South**

Monmouth, West Gardiner, Litchfield

**Secondary priority**

### **Description**

The south end of Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee Lake), extending north and west to Wilson Stream flowing into Lake Annabessacook, contains extensive habitat for wetland species as well as two bald eagle nesting areas and a heron rookery. The wetland at the south end of Cobbossee is a large complex consisting of deep areas of open water, fringed by dense cattail stands at lower reaches and by floodplain forest and sedge meadow at upper reaches. The open wetlands are not considered exemplary natural communities in themselves, but do support several rare animal species. Least Bittern, for example, is a rare and regionally declining species. (The floodplain forest has not been evaluated.) Cobbossee Stream in West Gardiner (at Collins Dam) is also a historic location for Threadfoot, a rare plant, but that has not been recently confirmed there.



Cobbossee Lake from the north

Bald eagles have used Cobbosseecontee intermittently. Nesting was recorded near the inlet in East Monmouth in 1966. Although transient eagles continued to visit the area in fall and spring, no residency was noted for the next twenty years as population declines nearly extirpated bald eagles from central Maine. Meanwhile, a large colony of great blue herons on Pinkham Island and a wide scattering of osprey nests among islands in the southern reaches of the lake suggested the area remained suitable for eagles' return. A non-breeding pair wandered the lake in 1997 – 1999 (briefly occupying an old osprey

nest on Pine Island during 1998). In 2000, a new eagle nest was occupied on Goodwin Island in West Gardiner. Nesting was successful even though a summer camp is not far away on the island. Many other islands in Cobbosseecontee appear to be suitable and relatively more secure niches, and time will tell whether Cobbossee becomes a steady and reliable nesting area for bald eagles.

#### Rare Species and Natural Communities Summary Table

Common Name	Latin Name	EO Rank	Global Rank	State Rank
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	--	G5	S2B
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	B	G5	S4B
Stinkpot	<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>	--	G5	S3
Ribbon Snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	--	G5	S3
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	--	G4	S4B

#### Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW

Extensive areas along Cobbosseecontee Stream east of the lake, the wetlands north and east of Wentworth Cove, the Jock Stream – Mud pond area at the south end of the lake, and Jug Stream (between Annabessacook and Cobbossee Lakes) are mapped as Wading Bird – Waterfowl Habitat. These overlap with all of the rare animal occurrences noted. Several Deer Wintering Areas are mapped as well, mostly on the east side of the lake.

#### Protection Status

The land in this area is all privately owned.

#### Conservation Considerations

Cobbosseecontee is a highly developed lake, so the conservation goal should be to minimize encroachment on what is currently undeveloped.

Appropriate conservation strategies include tree growth and open space treatments, conservation easements and fee ownership.

For lands where timber harvest or development continues, buffers should be maintained around all wetlands and ponds. While different species can have different buffering requirements, wider buffers provide better protection for riparian and wetland-dependent species. The state minimum shoreland zoning standards specify a minimum 75' buffer in which very little harvest or clearing is allowed, with less stringent restrictions within 250' of the wetland border. Better protection will be afforded to the wetlands and ponds if as little alteration as possible occurs within 250' of the wetland/upland border. Any timber harvesting within and adjacent to wetlands or adjacent to ponds should be implemented with strict adherence to Shoreland Zoning guidelines and Maine Forest Service Best Management Practices.